# 9 Tips for Communicating with your Users in a Crisis

## Communicate as much as possible

Make sure one person and one voice is delivering your messages -- this avoids confusion and creates a sense of direction (even if it was a team who put together the message)

Make sure your messages convey **empathy** and **hope**.

## Make sure everything has a date and time

Saying something like "we will not be open for the next two weeks" can be confusing for a user who finds your post a week later. Using specified dates and times will help prevent confusion.

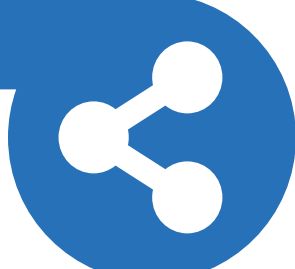For example, "We will be closed until April 15, 2020"

## Make sure you make changes in all places the info appears

If you're making major changes to your normal hours of operation or gathering locations, don't just update it in one location. If you have business hours in the sidebar, footer, and on Facebook (etc.), they should be updated in those locations, also.

## Make sure your information appears across platforms

People consume news in different ways. Some exclusively use Facebook or Twitter, while others only use the website. **Use your website as a hub** to create your posts and announcements and make sure you link to those posts and pages on all social media so your users always know it's available.

When displaying your post on Facebook, be sure to use the proper Order of Operations:
- use a photo
- blurb of Post
- a link to read the full post

## Don't overload your homepage

The last thing you want to do is inundate your homepage with an overwhelming amount of information that drowns out the other content your website has to offer.

Instead, create a simple and visible header that gets the most important information across to your users (for example, "Due to the COVID-19 lockdown in our area, we are closed.").

This can be followed up with a link to additional resources you're offering or where you plan on updating your opened/closed status (For example, "To keep up to date with our COVID-19 procedures, **please see our blog**. To view our resources and precautions our company is taking, review our **COVID-19 Resource page**.")

## Use pages and posts effectively (WordPress)

It's always important to keep in mind that pages are permanent (and updated) and posts are temporary. You don't want to be in the habit of deleting or editing posts.

If you want to create a a gathering of resources or precedures, you'll want to create a page so it has a static URL and is expected to be updated. For example: "COVID-19 Resources and Information."

If you want to tell your users about updates, you'll want to use a post. For example:  "UPDATE: How COVID-19 is effecting our hours."

## Embed videos directly on your site

During this time, people are trying to absorb information as quickly as possible. Instead of linking to a YouTube video, forcing users to jump to a new location, embed it directly onto the page or post you're referencing it in. In WordPress, this can be done by simply posting the video's URL into the content or by using a "YouTube embed" block.

## Use free online media resources to your advantage

Just because face-to-face contact isn't being encourage at the moment doesn't mean we need to exclude "face time" all together.

Pastors can successfully give their sermons live on FaceBook and YouTube (or put out recordings of sermons using SoundCloud).
Or, instead of canceling a meeting all together, board members can sign up for free video meeting services (like Zoom) and still put in that face-to-face contact (without risking spreading germs).

**Tips for successful video meetings:**
- Use a webcam (it makes things more personal)
- Use a headset with a mic so you're as clear as possible
- Make sure you're in a well-lit location so you can fully be seen

## Avoid presenting information as a flyer, image, or PDF

Important information should be formatted as text web-copy only.

Other formats often make information harder (or impossible) to read or share with other users. They also make updating them a much more time-consuming process. Additionally:

**PDFs:**
- do not allow users to access information quickly
- appear very small on smartphones
- are often not inherantly accessible

**Images and Flyers:**
- can not be read by popular devices such as Alexa and Google Home
- are not accessible
- can not be translated by the browser for users who may not speak English
- are often not created by professionals and tend to have readablity issues, even if a person as no vidual impairments.

# Bet Hannon
## BUSINESS WEBSITES